United Nations A/C.2/52/SR.51

General Assembly
Fifty-second session

Official Records

Distr.: General
18 December 1997

Original: English

**Second Committee**

**Summary record of the 51st meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 9 December 1997, at 3 p.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. de Rojas ..... (Venezuela)

## Contents

Agenda item 98: Environment and sustainable development (*continued*)

(b) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (*continued*)

(c) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (*continued*)

(e) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*)

(g) Special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 (*continued*)

Agenda item 96: Sectoral policy questions (*continued*)

(b) Business and development (*continued*)

(c) Food and sustainable agricultural development (*continued*)

Draft biennial programme of work for the Second Committee for 1998-1999

Suspension of the Committee's work

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

97-83433 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 4.15 p.m.*

**Agenda item 98: Environment and sustainable development** *(continued)*

**(b) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa** *(continued)*

*Draft resolutions on implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (A/C.2/52/L.22 and L.57)*

1. *At the request of the representative of the United States of America, a recorded vote was taken on paragraph 17 of draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.57.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe

*Against:*

United States of America

*Abstaining:*

Israel

2. *Paragraph 17 of draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.57 was adopted by 145 votes to 1, with 1 abstention.*

3. **Mr. Schumacher** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, stressed the need to implement the Convention on Desertification as well as all international instruments that strengthened partnership for sustainable development. The European Union would have liked to see the Committee adopt the text of the draft resolution by consensus, as was its normal practice. The European Union wished to point out that the programme budget implications of the draft resolution, contained in document A/C.2/52/L.54, were subject to approval by the Fifth Committee.

4. *Draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.57 as a whole was adopted.*

5. *Draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.22 was withdrawn.*

6. **Mr. Langley** (New Zealand) said that the draft resolution created a situation whereby the secretariat of the Convention on Desertification would be institutionally linked to the United Nations while not being fully integrated into the work programme or management structure of any particular department or programme. Such linkage would result in direct and indirect costs to the Organization and in an unacceptable lack of financial transparency and administrative accountability. His delegation continued to disagree with the commitment of United Nations resources to a body not wholly responsible to the United Nations. His delegation would be willing to support funding for the Convention secretariat from the Organization's regular budget provided that the secretariat was fully accountable within United Nations management structures. The General Assembly should consider, in the near future, a coherent and thorough assessment of the question of institutional linkages.

**(c) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind** *(continued)*

*Draft resolutions on protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (A/C.2/52/L.21 and L.55)*

7. **Mr. Glanzer** (Austria), Vice-Chairman, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.55, which he was submitting on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.21, and recommended its adoption by consensus.

8. *Draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.55 was adopted.*

9. *Draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.21 was withdrawn.*

**(e) Convention on Biological Diversity** *(continued)*

*Draft resolutions on the Convention on Biological Diversity (A/C.2/52/L.25 and L.56)*

10. **Mr. Glanzer** (Austria), Vice-Chairman, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.56, which he was submitting on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.25, and recommended its adoption by consensus.

11. *Draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.56 was adopted.*

12. *Draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.25 was withdrawn.*

**(g) Special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21** *(continued)*

*Draft resolution on implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, on environment and development (A/C.2/52/L.29)*

13. **The Chairman** announced that the draft resolution contained in document A/C.2/52/L.29 had been withdrawn.

*Draft decision on implementation and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (A/C.2/52/L.60)*

*Draft decision on progress in the implementation of Conventions related to sustainable development (A/C.52/L.61)*

14. **Mr. Glanzer** (Austria), Vice-Chairman, introduced draft decisions A/C.2/52/L.60 and L.61 and recommended their adoption.

15. **Mr. Kamando** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the withdrawal of draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.29 meant that, at its fifty-third session, the General Assembly would not have before it an item dealing with follow-up on Agenda 21. While it was regrettable that no consensus could be reached on the draft resolution, the Group of 77 and China could accept the two draft decisions. They believed that the partnership that had begun at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was still valid and hoped that all the commitments made at the Conference would be honoured.

16. **Mr. Yu Qingtai** (China) expressed the hope that all delegations would reflect on the circumstances that had led to the withdrawal of the draft resolution and would endeavour to achieve consensus on effective measures for the further implementation of Agenda 21.

17. *Draft decisions A/C.2/52/L.60 and L.61 were adopted.*

18. **Mr. Delaney** (Papua New Guinea) said that the decisions that had just been adopted were a valuable step towards consensus-building and would enable the parties to the various conventions in question to fulfil all their commitments. His delegation looked forward to the report that the Secretary-General would submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

19. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should adopt the following draft decision:

> "The General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly (A/52/280)."

He took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft decision.

20. *It was so decided.*

21. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should adopt the following draft decision:

> "The General Assembly takes note of the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (A/52/25)."

He took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft decision.

22. *It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 96: Sectoral policy questions** *(continued)*

**(b) Business and development** *(continued)*

*Draft resolutions on Business and Development (A/C.2/52/L.13 and L.13/Rev.1 and L.59)*

23. **Mr. Abdellatif** (Egypt), Vice-Chairman, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.59, which he was submitting on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.13, and recommended its adoption by consensus.

24. **Mr. Kamando** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that in the spirit of compromise the Group had accepted the draft

*ad referendum*. However, the Committee had witnessed a series of votes aimed at belittling the relevancy of sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Furthermore, the Group was disappointed at the way the United States had conducted itself on the issue. He therefore, moved the adjournment of the debate on the draft resolution under rule 116 of the Rules of Procedure.

25. **Mr. Winnick** (United States of America), speaking on a point of order, said that it had been his understanding that the draft resolution would be presented as a consensus text and that if there were no consensus, it would be withdrawn; he therefore requested clarification on that matter.

26. **Mr. Kamando** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that it had been presented *ad referendum*.

27. **Mr. Meyer** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, requested that the meeting should be suspended so that he could meet with members of his group to decide what their position would be.

28. **Mr. Kamando** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, opposed the motion.

29. **Mr. Meyer** (Luxembourg) speaking on behalf of the European Union, expressed astonishment at the opposition, noting that earlier requests by the Group of 77 and China for similar suspensions had been granted.

30. *A vote was taken on the motion to suspend the meeting.*

31. *The motion was rejected by 87 votes to 50, with 1 abstention.*

32. **Ms. Chávez** (Costa Rica) and **Mr. Hidayat** (Indonesia), as former and future Chairpersons of the Group of 77 and China, respectively, seconded the motion to adjourn the debate on the item.

33. **Mr. Winnick** (United States of America) said that his delegation had been glad to support the Group of 77 and China and thanked the Vice-Chairman for his hard work on the text. His delegation was surprised that the Group of 77 and China had moved the adjournment of the debate, considering that to be an act of extreme hostility towards one of its own members. He would vote against the motion and called upon other Member States to do so likewise.

34. **Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation had hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus. He was disappointed by the turn of events. Linking consensus to decisions taken earlier on the meeting was not conducive to a spirit of cooperation in the Committee. He would vote against the motion.

35. *A vote was taken on the motion to adjourn the debate on draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.59.*

36. *The motion was carried by 90 votes to 53, with no abstentions.*

37. **Mr. Winnick** (United States of America), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.13/Rev.1, said that Turkey had been added to the list of sponsors and that Mozambique was no longer a sponsor. Changes had been made to the draft in order to ensure the broadest possible support. Regrettably, he had to withdraw the draft resolution.

38. **Mr. Rahmtalla** (Sudan) said that his delegation rejected the notion that the motion by the Group of 77 and China to adjourn the debate was an act of hostility against the representative of Egypt and paid tribute to that representative's hard work on the draft resolution.

39. **Mr. Meyer** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, also paid tribute to the hard work of the representative of Egypt and reiterated his surprise at the Group of 77 and China's rejection of the Union's request for a suspension of the meeting.

40. **Mr. Kamando** (United Republic of Tanzania) speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he agreed with the statement made by the representative of the Sudan and that his motion to adjourn the debate was in no way a reflection of the hard work of the representative of Egypt.

41. **Mr. Ly** (Mauritania) said that he agreed with the statement made by the representative of Morocco at the previous meeting regarding draft resolution A/C.2/52/L.17/Rev.1.

### (c) Food and sustainable agricultural development *(continued)*

42. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should adopt the following draft decision:

> "The General Assembly takes note of the note of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the World Food Summit, including action to be taken to follow up the outcome at all appropriate levels (A/52/132-E/1997/57)."

43. *It was so decided.*

44. **Mr. Kamando** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that they had made every attempt to reflect the views of the European Union, and thanked the latter for its support on other issues.

**Draft biennial programme of work for the Second Committee for 1998-1999 (A/C.2/52/L.45)**

45. **Mr. Bunch** (Chief of the Documentation, Programming and Monitoring Section) drew attention to a number of editorial changes in the draft biennial programme of work (A/C.2/52/L.45).

46. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should adopt the draft biennial programme of work for 1998-1999, as orally revised.

47. *It was so decided.*

**Suspension of the Committee's work**

48. **The Chairman** said that he would continue to make every effort, in consultation with the President of the General Assembly, to promote consensus before submitting the Committee's report to the General Assembly.

49. **Mr. Kamando** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed his appreciation to the Group's development partners for their cooperation.

50. **Mr. Winnick** (United States of America) said that he regretted that the Committee had ended its work with a lack of consensus. The Second Committee must work to re-establish consensus as its mode of operation.

51. **The Chairman** declared the work of the Second Committee at its fifty-second session suspended.

*The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.*